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MONTGOMERY CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

TO HAWAII, GUAM, PALAU

AND

THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

APRIL 11-18, 1987

TRIP REPORT TO

THE

COMMITTEE ON

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MONTGOMERY CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO HAWAII, GUAM, PALAU AND THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

In a letter dated February 19, 1987 to the Chairman of the Committee (Mr. Montgomery), Mr. Charles E. Joeckel, Jr., Executive Director of the Washington Headquarters of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), expressed concern about the condition of various monuments and shrines in the Philippines honoring the memory of America's former prisoners of war and thousands of American and Philippine veterans who suffered and died on Corregidor, Bataan and other surrounding islands during World War II. The DAV proposed that the Chairman of the Committee lead a delegation to the Far East to inspect various sites, including the Pacific War Memorial located on the Island of Corregidor, and to meet with Philippine Government officials to discuss ways in which our two governments could work together to restore the memorial on Corregidor and the surrounding area to a place of dignity and respect. To that end, the DAV expressed its willingness to contribute toward the maintenance of the memorial.

On February 20, 1987, Chairman Montgomery announced plans to visit the Far East during the week of April 11–18 for the purpose of evaluating programs and services administered by the Veterans Administration (VA), the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and the Department of the Army in Hawaii, Guam and the Republic of the Philippines. During the trip, the Delegation would tour Fort DeRussy, the Tripler Army Medical Center and the National Cemetery at the Punchbowl in Hawaii, and meet with a group of veterans in Guam. While in the Philippines, the group would meet with President Corazon Aquino and other government leaders to discuss the restoration, operation and maintenance of the Pacific War Memorial on Corregidor; visit the memorial on Bataan, administered by the Philippine government; and meet with the staff of the VA Regional Office to discuss programs and services administered by the VA in the Philippines.

Accompanying the Chairman on the mission were Veterans' Affairs Committee members J. Roy Rowland of Georgia and Claude Harris of Alabama. Three members of the Disabled American Veterans accompanying the Delegation were Kenneth G. Musselmann, National Commander; Dale Adams, National Adjutant; and Charles Joeckel, Executive Director of the Washington Office.

Also accompanying the Delegation to Hawaii and Guam were Congressman Ron de Lugo, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Interior and International Affairs, and Congressman Robert J. Lagomarsino, Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The purpose of the Interior mission was to examine the prospects of approval by the Republic of Palau of the Compact of Free Association which was conditionally approved by

the United States in Public Law 99-658. Congressman de Lugo's group left the Delegation in Guam, but again joined the Delegation in Palau upon its return flight to the United States.

HAWAII

Fort DeRussy

Upon arrival in Hawaii on the afternoon of April 11, the Delegation was given a tour of the facilities at Fort DeRussy. Fort DeRussy is a 71-acre military installation located on Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. The installation is separated into two areas by Kalia Road. A 26-acre portion is a beach/park area. It contains the Hale Koa Hotel, a nonappropriated fund activity managed by the Army; the Armed Forces Recreation Center; a museum and visitors center. The Hale Koa Hotel was completed in 1975 at a cost of $20.5 million.

The other parcel of land consists of some 45 acres. This property is primarily devoted to training Army reserve units and includes 1.6 acres dedicated to the Waikiki Post Office. The reserve center was completed in 1977 at a cost of $2.5 million.

The Office of Management and Budget continues to pressure the Secretary of Defense and other Department and Agency heads to declare property excess so that Federal land can be sold to help reduce the national debt, a policy that has been generally rejected by the Congress. The Secretary of Defense has stated that he was prepared to make some of the land at Fort DeRussy available for sale if, in fact, the proceeds were actually to be used to help retire the Federal debt.

The Delegation believes that excessing any property at Fort DeRussy would be a mistake. Congress has specifically declared its opposition to such action. Public Law 90-110 provides that "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the land constituting Fort DeRussy, Hawaii, may be sold, leased, transferred, or otherwise disposed of by the Department of Defense unless hereafter authorized by law."

Section 101(k) of the 1987 Continuing Resolution (P.L. 99-500) incorporated the Military Construction Act and continued an annual prohibition on the use of funds for the sale, lease or rental of any part of Fort DeRussy. It should be noted, however, that other sections of the Continuing Resolution would allow the sale of 45 acres of the property at fair market value to the State of Hawaii or the City and County of Honolulu.

In a study recently conducted by the Department of Defense (DOD), it was found that the cost of relocating the Army facilities currently located in the 45-acre tract would be from $36 to $86 million. Other estimates run as high as $113 million. The Delegation was told that given current zoning restrictions, the sale of the land would generate no more than $50 to $55 million. Should the zoning limitations be removed, the fair market value of the property could be a great deal higher. It is doubtful, however, that local business interests would be interested in paying the price the property would bring were the zoning restrictions lifted and the property sold based on its highest and best use.

Another argument against selling any of Fort DeRussy is that the Hale Koa Hotel has been fully occupied for many years and military personnel are currently being turned away. Rates at the Hale Koa Hotel are prorated according to rank of active duty and retired service members. Future expansion of the Armed Forces Recreation Center is a real possibility. In addition, the open area on Fort DeRussy serves as a recreation area for both military and civilian communities on Waikiki. The Delegation was told that many civic functions are held on the property which makes for a positive relationship between the military and civilian population. In fact, the Delegation believes that the 1,200-space parking lot should be replaced with a multi-story parking garage as soon as possible. The land could be landscaped and more parkland could then be made available to both military and civilian personnel.

Veterans Administration Regional Office

The Regional Office of the Veterans Administration in Hawaii has jurisdiction over benefits and services to 110,000 veterans in the State and the Islands of Guam, American Samoa, Wake, Midway and the Trust Territories of the Pacific. The Regional Office processes compensation and pension claims and education and loan guaranty applications. It also operates an extensive Outpatient Clinic with a full range of services.

Although the Delegation did not visit the Regional Office, members of the Delegation did have the opportunity to meet informally with the Director to discuss various programs under his jurisdiction. The total number of compensation claims are decreasing throughout most of the country; however, in Hawaii, the number of such claims has increased slightly during the last four years. Death compensation claims have been relatively constant for the past three years. Pension claims have decreased at a lesser rate in Hawaii than in most other States. Burial allowances are relatively static.

In 1986, original or refinanced home loans doubled from the previous year. During FY 1987, as of February 28, the Regional Office had processed 4,147 new eligibility determinations. This means that in the first five months of FY 1987, the office was only 1,500 cases below its previous year figures. Defaults are substantially higher in the first five months of this year versus last year, but are still comparatively low. Moreover, the inventory of foreclosed homes is not increasing as rapidly as in many other areas of the country.

Although the Regional Office is handling its workload relatively well, as the Committee has found to be the case in other regional offices, more staff is needed to handle the increasing loan guaranty workload. It should be noted that with the recent upturn in interest rates, more veterans will be seeking loan closure commitments and the Administrator should take immediate action to make certain that loan applications are processed without undue delays. Otherwise, veterans in Hawaii will be subjected to higher interest rates on their loans due to the agency's inability to process applications on a timely basis. In this regard, this Regional Office, like most others, is not meeting VA Central Office timeliness standards due to the lack of some key personnel needed to process its increased workloads.

The Outpatient Clinic is a part of the Regional Office. It is staffed with over 153 employees. The clinic has had a very good affiliation with the University of Hawaii School of Medicine since February of 1975. The clinic has jurisdiction over a satellite outpatient clinic on Guam which is staffed by one part-time clerical employee, two full-time administrative employees and a full-time physician. The clinic is located at the Naval Regional Medical Center in Agana, and it receives medical support through a sharing agreement with the U.S. Navy.

The Outpatient Clinic in Hawaii also operates a 20-bed VA psychiatric ward located at Tripler Army Medical Center. A five-member, outreach Vet Center is located about two miles from the Federal Building in downtown Honolulu, and administers a $175,000 counseling contract program covering the outer Hawaiian Islands.

Periodic field visits by Regional Office personnel are conducted for veterans residing on the outer islands of Maui, Kauai and Hawaii (separate counties in the State of Hawaii). Field visits are also provided to American Samoa, Guam and Micronesia as required.

There is no VA hospital in Hawaii. Hospital care is provided as required to veterans at Tripler where treatment is available on a contract basis. Treatment is also provided from the private sector on a fee-basis arrangement.

Medical services and administrative costs for the operation of the Outpatient Clinic for fiscal year 1985 totaled more than $21 million. The benefit side of the Regional Office had program expenditures in fiscal year 1985 of about $60 million and a work force of 74 full-time employees.

Tripler Army Medical Center

On Sunday, April 12, the Delegation visited Tripler Army Medical Center. Tripler has served as the VA hospital in the Pacific since 1932. In general, the VA/Tripler relationship has been a positive one and is an important component of VA health care. The VA maintains an average daily census of approximately 50 contract patients at Tripler. In addition to its 20-bed psychiatric unit, Tripler has completed construction of a new hospital and the old wings and buildings are in the process of being renovated.

The Commanding General of the Center, Maj. Gen. John Major, informed the Delegation that he is unable to staff certain parts of the hospital because of limited resources. General Major feels he can solve many of his staffing problems, however, if the VA and the Department of Defense would strengthen and expand the existing sharing agreement. Although the new hospital at Tripler could care for many more veteran patients, due to the inability to fully staff the facility, VA patients have to be referred elsewhere. General Major does not expect additional funding from the Department of Defense. Therefore, unless the VA is willing to provide funds for much-needed staff, care of veteran patients will continue to be limited. The hiring of additional staff would also permit Tripler to expand laboratory and other support activities for the VA.

The Delegation feels strongly that the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration should be encouraged to cooper-

ate fully, thus maximizing use of the facilities at Tripler. Current law provides all the authority necessary for VA and DOD to care for both military and veteran patients at this facility. At present, the per diem that is paid for VA patients under the existing VA/DOD sharing agreement may be less than equitable and consideration should be given to renegotiating the agreement.

In 1981, the Chief Medical Director of the Veterans Administration agreed to utilize the E-Wing of Tripler to provide selected inpatient services to veterans. This was to occur when the main core of the new military hospital was completed. The space was to be available to the VA in 1983.

The space could not be turned over to the VA until the major renovation project at Tripler had been completed. When the agreement was made, the VA expected that the transfer of E-Wing would take place in 1983. The date of availability of E-Wing has been repeatedly pushed back and the VA has now been told that Tripler will be unable to transfer the wing until 1990 at the earliest. While the proposed project continues to offer benefits for both the VA and the Army, the lack of resources at Tripler, and the delay in moving into the E-Wing, are causing increasing numbers of complaints about the quality and quantity of care at Tripler.

Construction delays by the Department of Defense have forced the VA to go elsewhere for care and treatment of its veterans. During the past two years, decreasing resources at Tripler have caused more veteran patients to be diverted to the private sector, which results in fragmentation of health care delivery and increases costs. Veterans have complained to the Committee about the adverse impact of limited resources at Tripler and the number of these types of complaints and incidents continue to grow. Various services are no longer available to VA such as ophthalmology, neurosurgery, physiotherapy, and plastic surgery.

Although there will be no specific E-Wing construction schedule by VA until the project is reestablished, it is estimated that 51 months will be required to develop space requirements and conceptual plans, negotiate and award a preliminary design contract, complete preliminary design and complete working drawings. After the wing is made available (assuming a January, 1990 date), three months would be required to advertise and award the construction contract, and it would take 30 to 36 months to complete construction of the project. The entire process would involve 84 months of planning and construction and the earliest estimated date of completion would be March, 1994.

The Delegation was very impressed with the new hospital at Tripler and the renovation of the outer wings now underway. The sophisticated equipment that is available for diagnosis and treatment and the wide range of services that are covered makes the facility a true tertiary hospital. Apparently, the quality of service that is rendered is very good, but there is a lack of medical personnel in some areas, preventing the hospital from reaching its full potential. General Major thought there might be enough room at Tripler to take care of all VA patients, but again, there is not adequate medical personnel to do this under current conditions.

The proposed inpatient facility was originally to house 60 to 70 long-term psychiatric and 60 nursing home care beds. The VA

planned to use FY 1982 Advance Planning Funds to begin project development. Since 1981, when the VA was promised the E-Wing, VA's workload has changed and the E-Wing renovation was put on hold several times while new bed requirements were developed through the VA planning process. These new requirements have now been proposed as follows:

Type	Short-Term	Long-Term
Medicine	45 Med/Surg	45
Surgery		30
Psychiatry (Acute & Chronic)		30
Nursing Home	30	60

Due to the long construction delays, an assessment was made by VA of alternative sources of space. Excess capacity was found in community health care facilities. The Queens Medical Center is a modern facility that has more space than it needs to care for its patient demand. Queens has offered to lease space to the VA for its inpatient care and support services. Under the lease agreement, the VA would provide its own staff, and would manage the care of its patients.

The Chief Medical Director of the VA's Department of Medicine and Surgery feels this arrangement could provide a short-term solution to its current inpatient space problems at Tripler until such time as arrangements can be made to get additional staff at Tripler and the E-Wing modernization is completed.

In a memorandum dated March 11, 1987, the Western Regional Director of the VA requested that the Office of Facilities initiate the required studies so that beds can be provided in Honolulu at the earliest possible date. The March 11 memorandum also provided the revised long-term requirements for beds and requested that an updated cost estimate be obtained on the Tripler project. The memorandum reiterated that Tripler is still the primary choice as the long-term site for VA beds in Honolulu.

Physicians who led the Delegation on a tour of Tripler Army Medical Center were asked how military physicians feel about treating veteran patients. They responded that when patients have on their pajamas, medical personnel don't know veteran patients from military patients and all are treated the same. There seemed to be a very good relationship between the VA and the military staff at Tripler.

The Delegation was struck by the cost of the medical care provided to VA patients at Tripler (a tertiary facility) as compared with the cost in the private sector. One example that was given was the cost of Nuclear Magnetic Imagery (NMI), which costs the VA about three times as much in the private sector as it costs at Tripler. The Delegation feels there would be a significant savings to the Federal Government if something can be worked out for all veteran patients to be treated there. In fact, it may be that savings to the VA (with all care provided at Tripler) would be sufficient to offset the

cost incurred should the VA provide funds for much-needed staff to Tripler.

The Delegation would like to see a cost-benefit analysis on this and encourages the VA, through Dr. Vandervort, and the military, through General Major, to develop a sound proposal to be submitted to VA Central Office with a copy to the Committee. It could be a good arrangement for the VA as well as the military. Tripler would get much-needed health care specialists and, in return, the VA would get better care for more veteran patients.

With regard to treating veterans at Queens Medical Hospital under a lease agreement, there apparently is some thought that this arrangement would be more cost-effective than the current fee basis cost arrangement. Although this may be true, the Delegation feels the cost of inpatient care for veterans at Tripler would still be considerably less. Both proposals should be explored further and the VA should not enter into any agreement with private hospitals until further study and analysis are undertaken by the VA and Tripler. The Delegation is not aware that the VA has had any experience with the type of arrangement being proposed by the management of Queens Medical Center.

While further discussions are continuing between Tripler and the VA, it should be noted that military medicine may be going through some rather dramatic changes. Retirees and dependents may be channeled toward CHAMPUS. Should this occur, it could mean that only active duty persons would be treated at facilities such as Tripler. Thus, additional beds could be made available for veteran patients. On the down side, this could possibly change Tripler's employee and specialty mix so that various services may not be available in the future.

The Delegation was very impressed by the dedication of Dr. Bill Vandervort, the Director of the VA Outpatient Clinic. He made a very good presentation and both he and General Major seem to want to work out an agreement so that long-term care and care for psychiatric patients (about 130 beds) could be provided in E-Wing. They have only recently begun to discuss acute care of medical and surgical patients which may require an additional 70 beds or so. Although they have not discussed this to any great extent yet, both seemed eager to talk about it further.

Given the alternatives available to the Veterans Administration, the Delegation does not feel the VA should seriously consider building its own hospital.

A major problem was noted during discussions with VA and Tripler staff concerning the VA's recently issued guidelines pertaining to the payment of beneficiary travel. As understood by the Delegation, under the new regulations, the Veterans Administration will no longer pay for the travel of veterans who come to the VA for care from the outer islands at a distance greater than 100 miles. As explained to the Delegation, the new regulations will make it impossible for sick and needy veterans to get medical care because they will be unable to pay for air fare. Dr. Vandervort informed the Delegation that he had asked Central Office to make an exception in this case due to the unique situation that exists with these isolated veterans. The Delegation encourages the Chief Medical Director to grant such an exception.

National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl)

On Sunday morning, April 12, the Delegation visited the National Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl). The cemetery is located in Punchbowl Crater, the remnant of a 75,000 year old extinct volcano on the island of Oahu.

The cemetery, dedicated in 1949, is a 112.5-acre site dominating the heart of Honolulu. It is operated and maintained by the Veterans Administration. Nearly 13,000 World War II veterans from the Pacific are buried there, including the remains of servicemen who saw action in Guadalcanal, China, Burma, Saipan, Guam and Iwo Jima, and those who were incarcerated in POW camps. The cemetery is also the final resting place for 848 unknowns from the Korean Conflict whose remains could not be identified.

The American Battle Monuments Commission erected a memorial at the cemetery in 1966 to commemorate members of the Armed Forces who served during World War II and the Korean Conflict in the Pacific area, and whose remains were missing or buried at sea. On the marble walls of the "Courts of the Missing" are engraved 26,280 names, including 26 who posthumously received the Medal of Honor. These MIAs came from every State of the Union and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Panama Canal Zone, Guam, the Philippines, Mexico, Canada and Samoa.

The Delegation was met at the cemetery by Mr. Bill Rodgers, Cemetery Administrator, who led it on a tour of the facility. He informed the group that the cemetery contained 32,800 filled graves and that ground burials will not be available beyond calendar year 1988 when the cemetery will be filled. An 8,425-space columbarium was opened in 1982 and will allow for above-ground grave space well into the next century. Mr. Rodgers informed the Delegation that a study is now underway to determine whether additional land can be made available for ground burials beyond calendar year 1988.

It was pointed out that the cemetery is the number one tourist attraction in Hawaii. Ernie Pyle, noted World War II correspondent, and Air Force Lt. Col. Ellison Onizuka, one of the seven Challenger astronauts who died in 1985, are buried there. Mr. Rodgers said more than five and one-half million people visited the cemetery last year. It should also be noted that some 9,000 people attended last year's sunrise Easter service at the cemetery.

The cemetery is impressive and beautifully maintained. The grave markers are flat and the cemetery gives the appearance of a well landscaped park. Mr. Rodgers and his staff do an excellent job of keeping the cemetery attractive at all times and are to be commended for their dedicated service.

GUAM

The Delegation arrived in Guam around noon on Tuesday, April 14. The Delegation was welcomed to the island by Congressman Ben Blaz, Governor Joseph P. Ada, Speaker Franklin Quitugua, and other government officials. Following a welcoming ceremony and inspection of the Honor Guard by Chairman Montgomery, Delegation members met with a group of veterans from the following organizations: the National Association of Uniformed Services, Dis-

abled American Veterans, Philippine Scouts of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Fleet Reserve Association, the Vietnam Veterans of Guam, U.S. Armed Forces Retirees Association, and the Guam Korean Veterans Association.

The Delegation was informed that the local bank has been slow in processing applications for VA home loans. VA Central Office is aware of the problem and a representative from the Loan Guaranty Office in Washington is scheduled to visit Guam to discuss the issue with local representatives in the near future and to assist in improving local processing procedures.

Some of the veterans expressed concern about delays in processing compensation and pension claims. General satisfaction was expressed about the quality of care received at the VA Outpatient Clinic.

There is no reliable information about the number of veterans on Guam. Estimates vary from 7,000 to 10,000. Most of the veterans are Vietnam era. There are 40,000 U.S. military residents on the island.

The VA Clinic was opened on January 25, 1982, as an extension of the Honolulu Regional Office. For the last two years, it has been located in the U.S. Naval Regional Medical Center in Agana. Benefits available to Guamanian veterans cover the full range offered by the VA. Cash benefits are disbursed in dollars at the same rate as on the U.S. mainland.

The VA Outpatient Clinic is headed by Dr. John Steele, a board eligible neurologist. Dr. Steele was not present upon our arrival on Guam; however, members of the Delegation did meet him on the return stopover on Friday, April 17.

Dr. Steele informed Dr. Rowland that he was very pleased with the outpatient situation on Guam and that he was also especially pleased with the treatment of inpatients, some of whom were treated in the Naval Hospital and others in the private sector. He preferred to have all inpatients treated at the Naval Hospital but occasionally that was not possible. He does not treat inpatients. They are treated either by the Naval physicians or physicians in the private sector. But he does visit them in the hospital and is pleased with the treatment they receive.

Through a sharing agreement between the Navy and the VA, Dr. Steele spends one day per week examining patients with Guam disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). He has an assistant paid for under the sharing agreement. In exchange for Dr. Steele's neurology consults, the sharing agreement with the Navy provides for it to take care of any backlog in the Guam clinic. Monthly outpatient visits generally run from 70 to 80, with approximately 13 new patients per month. A new psychiatrist will arrive on Guam in July, 1987, and will work for the VA clinic one afternoon per week. This will increase the level of mental health services available to veterans.

Expansion and Improvement of National Cemetery

In November, 1985, the VA awarded a grant of $2,560,471 to the Territory of Guam for the expansion and improvement of a Navy cemetery which had been turned over to the control of the Government of Guam. Under the provisions of the Omnibus Territories

Act (P.L. 95-134), the Government of Guam was granted a waiver of the matching funds requirements. Therefore, the Federal share shall be the lesser of $2,560,471 or 100 percent of the actual cost of construction.

The VA has been unable to effectively monitor the execution of the grant due to the Government of Guam's inability to comply with the reporting requirements. At the Department of Memorial Affairs' request, VA office representatives on Guam made a site visit to the cemetery in September, 1986. They reported that the area was poorly manicured, graves were marked with temporary (wooden) crosses, markers were improperly aligned, and there were many weather-beaten crosses with illegible inscriptions.

On March 20, the VA received a letter from the new Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, Government of Guam, stating that the contractor for the cemetery construction project has been defaulted. Construction costs reported to date amount to $698,374 or about 27% of the grant. The Government of Guam had drawn $1,250,000 from the letter of credit before it was revoked by the VA in October, 1986. Completion of construction had originally been scheduled for January 13, 1987. The Delegation was informed that a site visit by the Director, State Cemetery Grants Program, was scheduled for April 20-23, 1987.

Based on the information available to the Delegation, it is felt that the VA should have had in place a better procedure for monitoring the disbursement of funds under the grant program. The agency should consider modifying its procedures so that a draw from the line of credit can be made only as certain phases of construction progress. The VA is aware of the need to correct the problem and appears to be taking action to resolve it.

PHILIPPINES

The Delegation arrived in Manila April 14, and was met at the airport by Charge d'Affaires Philip Kaplan. On the evening of the 14th, Mr. Kaplan hosted a reception in honor of the Delegation. Attendees included several Cabinet Secretaries as well as key American Chamber of Commerce Filipino businessmen and women and Filipino-American Memorial Endowment (FAME) Officers.

Country Briefing by Philip Kaplan, Charge d'Affaires

Prior to departing for Corregidor and Bataan on Wednesday, April 15, the Delegation was briefed by Charge d'Affaires Philip Kaplan and his associates with respect to concerns in the Philippines. Security in the islands, stability of the Aquino Government, economic factors in the Philippines, relationships with the United States and safety of Americans traveling throughout the country were covered. Following the briefing, discussions turned to conditions on Corregidor with emphasis on the War Memorial.

The Delegation was told that the entire island was in ruins and overrun by vegetation; that the memorial was in a state of serious disrepair; and that a considerable sum would be necessary to bring it up to acceptable standards. The Delegation was also informed that tour boats were no longer in service between Manila and Corregidor and that the island was seldom visited. The picture that

was painted was a sad and disturbing one. However, what was to be seen later by the Delegation made that conclusion pale by comparison.

The Chairman stated the purpose of the Congressional visit. He also explained the role tentatively being considered by the Disabled American Veterans. He explained the jurisdictional aspect of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee as it relates to the American Battle Monuments Commission and expressed the hope that the Commission could play a leading role along with the Committee in the restoration not only of the Memorial itself but other structures on Corregidor such as barracks, artillery batteries, tunnels, beaches, battlefield relics, etc.

Mr. Kaplan briefly commented on plans by the Philippine Bureau of Tourism as they relate to local plans and endeavors to restore parts or all of Corregidor. Mr. Montgomery noted that he was aware of those possibilities as were the DAV officials. He reiterated his feeling that the American Battle Monuments Commission should be involved in any activity because of its proven ability and because it has the respect of the American government and the American people.

Meeting with President Corazon Aquino

On Wednesday morning, April 15, members of the Delegation met with President Corazon Aquino in the Malacanang Executive Office Building. Delegation members included the Honorable G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery, the Honorable J. Roy Rowland, the Honorable Claude Harris, and Mr. Kenneth Musselmann, Mr. Dale Adams and Mr. Charles Joeckel of the Disabled American Veterans. President Aquino's staff included Defense Secretary Rafael Ileto; Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General Fidel Ramos; Palace Military Adviser MGen Jose Magno; Presidential Counselor Teodoro Locsin; Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Tourism, Ms. Narzalina A. Lim; and Palace Advisers Romero and Perez Rubio. Charge d'Affaires Kaplan also attended the meeting.

Chairman Montgomery expressed his appreciation to Mrs. Aquino for meeting with the Delegation. He explained the Delegation's mission and the desire to cooperate with her government to help restore the Pacific War Memorial on Corregidor. Mrs. Aquino acknowledged the importance of the meeting and informed the Delegation that although she had planned to be away from Malacanang in observance of Holy Week, she felt the meeting should be held. Mrs. Aquino informed the Delegation that she had received many phone calls in reference to its trip to the Philippines.

Chairman Montgomery expressed urgency in securing Corregidor and that our Delegation was concerned with the destruction of the guns and other sections of the memorial by thieves as reported in *National Geographic Magazine* last year. Secretary Ileto assured the Delegation that security would be provided on the island and that it would be put in place right away.

Dr. Rowland inquired about the pilfering that had been reported in the media and whether it was still going on. He was informed that due to the drop in the price of scrap iron and steel, thieves no longer found it to be profitable; however, should the price begin to rise again, the scavengers would return unless the gun emplace-

ments were secured. Again, the Delegation urged that security be established and maintained on the island as quickly as possible.

It was stressed that whatever was done to restore Corregidor should be undertaken as a joint effort. The two governments should work together since our efforts were to honor both Filipinos and Americans who suffered and died on the island in defense of freedom. The Delegation informed President Aquino that it was ready to do whatever is necessary to help finance the restoration and to provide personnel to operate and maintain the shrines and memorial on Corregidor if an appropriate agreement could be worked out between the two governments. The Delegation pointed out the experience of the American Battle Monuments Commission in maintaining monuments and memorials. It was noted that the Commission does an outstanding job in maintaining the National Cemetery in Manila, and the Delegation felt the Commission could play a major role in helping to restore the Pacific War Memorial.

Mr. Kenneth Musselmann, National Commander of the Disabled American Veterans, pointed out that his organization consisted of more than one million members of which some 50,000 are former prisoners of war. He told the President that his organization is willing to contribute funds toward the operation and maintenance of the memorial if we can work out an agreement to involve the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Mrs. Aquino informed the group that the memorial is now under the jurisdiction of the Department of Tourism, and that following our site visit to Corregidor, Deputy Minister Lim and other members of the staff would disclose a Master Plan that had been developed for the restoration of Corregidor.

The President then turned to two subjects not on the agenda for discussion. She stated that our government had promised to deliver to the Philippines some $10 million in medical supplies and that only $2.8 million of the amount had been received. She also informed the group that her government had been promised 10 UH-1 helicopters during her September, 1985 State visit and these had not yet been received. She made the point that trained pilots are ready to fly them as soon as they arrive and she asked that the Delegation see what could be done to expedite the delivery of these items.

Chairman Montgomery assured the President that he would check into these matters upon his return to Washington; however, he informed the President that the Delegation's top priority was the restoration, operation and maintenance of Corregidor and that all of these things were tied together. He stressed the need for our two governments to work together in resolving all of these problems.

Press interest in the meeting was high. Reports on the meeting centered on security assistance issues and the delivery of medical supplies. Chairman Montgomery informed the press that the Delegation came to the Philippines to meet with the President to discuss how our two governments might work together in restoring the shrines and monuments on Corregidor, that the meeting was cordial and constructive, and that the President had assured the Delegation of her willingness to support our efforts. He assured the

press he would carry President Aquino's messages about security commitments and medical supplies back to Washington.

Site Visit to Corregidor

Following the meeting with President Aquino, the Delegation embarked in two U.S. Air Force helicopters for the fifteen minute flight to Corregidor. Corregidor is one of the five islands that are strung across the entrance to Manila Bay. It is a rocky outcrop that is approximately 576 hectares in area. Shaped like a tadpole, its elongation lies on the east-west direction. Hence, its "head" faces west towards the China Sea, its "tail" east towards Manila Bay. Bataan lies to the north and Cavite is to its south.

Corregidor is approximately 43 kilometers from Manila, 16 kilometers from Cavite and 8 kilometers from Bataan. It can be reached by sea in about an hour and fifteen minutes by air.

In 1906 it became a military reservation and at the time of the invasion by the Japanese it was a model American outpost in the Pacific. Topside towered the island with its Milelong Barracks, Military Parade Ground, Post Headquarters, Post Theater, American High School, Officers' Club, a nine-hole golf course, the Senior Officers' Row, Commissary, some batteries and the Spanish lighthouse.

The Middleside Plateau housed the Middleside Barracks. It also housed the station Hospital (1903), Stockade, a chapel, and a Filipino elementary school.

Bottomside was the residential area of Barrio San Jose (a rustic Spanish village). It contained several commercial establishments, a chapel, one-room schoolhouse, market place (where General Wainwright surrendered on May 6, 1942), warehouse, four docks (South, Army, Engineering and Lorcha), Power Plant and Cold Storage, and the beachfront.

The Malinta Hill was hewn out of solid rock in 1922 as an arsenal and bomb-proof shelter and storage facility. It contained a three-tunnel system (main, hospital and navy). It sheltered the USAFFE Headquarters of Gen. MacArthur, the Harbor Defense of General Moore and the sick and dying soldiers in the battlefields. The Malinta tunnel is composed of 24 laterals branching out from a main tunnel, 835 feet long and 24 feet wide. The approach to the helicopter landing pads gave members of the Delegation a view of the entire island and foretold to a degree the scenes that were to follow. Those scenes were of almost total desecration of every aspect of Corregidor's historic sites including the vestiges of battle, the buildings around the memorial and the memorial itself.

The Delegation boarded old buses and toured most of the island ending up with a comprehensive visit to the war memorial and its adjacent museum. The Delegation was guided by Mr. Jim Black who is a recognized authority on all aspects of Corregidor. Mr. Black was born on the island but his family moved to Manila when he was three years old. He was thirteen years of age when Corregidor fell. He has spent his adult life as a history student of the island and has written numerous articles about it. He is mentioned in an excellent article about the deterioration of Corregidor that appeared in the *National Geographic Magazine* in July, 1986.

In addition to Mr. Black, others accompanying the Delegation on a tour of the island were Mr. Al McGrew of San Diego, California, a Corregidor veteran who was captured there and who spent the entire war as a prisoner of war; Mr. Lee Skinner of San Francisco, California; Mr. Alan Hardy, military historian, of Pasadena, California; Mr. Ed McCarthy of San Francisco, California; Mr. Tony Gochar, Assistant Director of the VA Regional Office in Manila; and Mr. Wayne Salisbury, Second Secretary, U.S. Embassy in Manila.

Mr. Black, Mr. Skinner and others in their party were of great help to the Delegation. They spent considerable time with the Delegation giving facts, figures and valuable insight into how the island had fallen into such a sorry state. The Delegation is very grateful to all those who gave it assistance and counsel during the site visit.

It is most difficult to convey in words the conditions on Corregidor. For the purposes of this report, they fall into two categories; first, the entire island, and then the memorial.

With respect to the island, the Delegation made a number of observations:

Every artillery emplacement has been extensively damaged. Most have been ravaged by scavengers who have raided the island to steal metal to be sold for scrap.

No effort of any consequence has been made to secure any part of the island fortresses.

The island is overrun with vegetation.

The beaches are dirty, littered with debris of every kind and largely unmarked as to their historic and battlefield significance.

At one time, some efforts appeared to have been made to erect signs around the island. However, the signs now remaining are very old, in great disrepair and often contain incorrect information.

Most buildings of a military nature have been reduced to rubble. These include barracks, headquarters, training facilities, and machine and supply shops.

Milanta Tunnel was still passable by automobile or bus, however, the lateral tunnels at MacArthur Headquarters and others in the tunnel system were unkempt, unlighted, and sometimes impassable.

Roads are very old and many are now impassable.

Some commercial buildings were once contemplated but after being started were later abandoned and left as eyesores.

The historic caves and tunnels used by Generals MacArthur and Wainwright as their headquarters are all but abandoned. Used as a 1,000-bed hospital during the Battle of Corregidor, they have dirt floors, are unlighted, and have old signs that can scarcely be seen or read.

Few people live on the island. They raise some garden foods, tend to a small goat population and are obviously very poor.

No tourism or visitation of any consequence takes place on the island. There is one four bedroom commercial establishment and one fruit stand type of store that sells soft drinks and a few staples. It caters to the island population and to the few visitors that come to the memorial either by fishing boats or by military aircraft.

A Japanese cemetery was recently discovered. It is unkempt and ragged. Apparently one other Japanese cemetery also exists on the island.

With respect to the memorial, the Delegation also had a number of observations:

A once beautiful and meaningful monument has been shamefully neglected and allowed to deteriorate to an almost unbelieveable extent.

A moat surrounds and is interspersed throughout other parts of the memorial. It was intended to have constantly moving water flowing through it. Instead it has accumulated stagnant, unsightly rainwater. The moat is apparently never cleaned. The generator which was designed to move the water has not worked for years and no efforts to repair it are in evidence.

The main generator on the island has been removed and there is no electric power available on the island.

The monument walls have cracked in many places and are very unsightly.

Lighting for the monument does not work due to the lack of a generator and the wiring to it and other parts of the monument has deteriorated to the point that it must be completely replaced.

There is an "eternal flame" statue at the far end of the monument. It reaches high into the sky and is supposed to be lighted by electrical current to resemble an actual flame.

The grounds around the monument are not well maintained.

Inscriptions on various parts of the monument have been adversely affected by the weather and have not been properly treated or cared for.

There are holes throughout the monument flooring that have obviously been there for several years with no attempt to repair them.

The museum's appearance is not nearly as bad as the adjacent monument. However, it, too, shows an obvious lack of maintenance. Picture frames housing historical documents

signed by Generals MacArthur, Wainwright and others are falling apart.

There are holes in the roof of the museum and signs of leaks appear in several places.

The mosaic depiction of the war in the Pacific is the only part of the museum that apparently has weathered the complete lack of attention that permeates all other aspects of the memorial.

The observations above may be capsuled into very definite and absolute conclusions.

All Americans value the heroic memories of Corregidor as they relate to the pain and suffering endured there. The war memorial should be quickly restored to its rightful place of dignity and respect and it is toward that objective that our nation should direct its thoughts and actions.

The sadness that was Corregidor was followed by a pride that came over the Delegation as it then flew to Bataan to see the memorial erected at Mt. Samat by the Government of the Philippines. It was beautifully maintained. A majestic, lighted cross 370 feet high is on a hill immediately behind the memorial. It overlooks a valley on Bataan where World War II battles occurred.

Inscriptions on the walls chronicle the battle of Bataan and pay silent tribute to the thousands of Americans and Philippine servicemen who defended it valiantly against the enemy which was later to make barbarism an instrument of its national policy.

The stark contrasts of the Corregidor and Bataan Memorials made lasting impressions on the Delegation. Obviously, the Philippine government has had in the past a much greater interest in maintaining the memorial at Bataan than the memorial on Corregidor.

Meeting With Department of Tourism Officials

Following the site visit to Corregidor and Bataan, Delegation members discussed the contrast of the two memorials during a meeting with top officials of the Department of Tourism of the Philippine Government. The meeting was chaired by Tourism Under Secretary Sostenes Campillo (Acting Secretary), along with Under Secretaries Narzalina Lim, Walfrido Reyes and Philippine Tourism Authority Director Ramon Binamira. The Department's consultants on Corregidor were present, along with Department of National Defense Under Secretary, Leonard Quisimbing.

Under Secretary Campillo opened the meeting with a presentation and videotape covering his Department's plans for the restoration of Corregidor. Among the plans are the repair of damaged infrastructure, restoration of the Pacific War Memorial, improved security against scavengers and development for tourists. The plan is in its infancy but does indicate some promise for the future.

The proposed restoration and development would be implemented and managed by the Corregidor Foundation, a non-stock corporation to be created under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines. The Corporation would exist for 50 years from the date of incorporation. Its principal office would be in Manila. Funds for

the restoration and development of the island would be channeled through the Corporation.

The plan consists of two phases. Phase One would develop the Memorial Zone, consisting of the high areas of Topside and Middleside. Government officials frankly admitted to the sad state of the memorial as it currently exists and recognized that it was an intolerable situation that must be dealt with immediately.

The second phase (Tourist Zone) of the government's plan is to promote economic development on the southern part or "tail" of Corregidor by making it a tourist attraction highlighted by the memorial. The entire island would be cleared, roads would be repaired, and an amphitheater would be built to house a light and sound show depicting the history and battles of Corregidor. Shops, restaurants, medical facilities, and motels and hotels would be built. The tunnels of Corregidor would be lighted and made habitable. An old streetcar system would be revived with updated modern equipment and would transverse the entire island. Hydrofoil boat service to and from Manila would be reestablished and Corregidor would be publicized as a major world tourist attraction.

The ambitious Philippine plan would cost many millions of dollars. None of this sum as yet has been raised, although one million pesos have been tentatively pledged to begin the project. Private and public money would later be used from both the Philippines and from abroad, particularly from the United States.

The Delegation was impressed with phase one but skeptical about phase two and stressed the need to immediately begin the process of restoring the memorial. As a first priority, it was emphasized that both the island and the memorial need to be made secure. The Minister of Tourism and his associates agreed with these concerns.

The Delegation made a number of specific suggestions to Department officials as to what it thought should and could be done at Corregidor. It made specific references to "action now and not tomorrow".

Chairman Montgomery specifically proposed joint planning on restoration and an immediate upgrade in security. He stressed the need for quick action to restore the memorial and asked if the Department would consider approving a plan that would expand ABMC's functions in the Philippines to cover not only restoration but also future oversight of maintenance of the memorial and site. Under Secretary Campillo stated his belief that his government would be able to live with an arrangement that incorporated the ABMC activities within the framework of the Foundation.

Congressman Rowland also expressed concern about the need to establish a security force on the island. He emphasized the importance of the "partnership" between the U.S. and Philippine governments in restoring the monument and surrounding grounds, and stated that the undertaking must be a joint effort.

Congressman Harris stressed the need to move quickly on securing the island. He also expressed the view that contributions by U.S. citizens should be limited to the sphere of historical preservation and maintenance only and probably could not be used for tourist development.

DAV officials indicated they would donate $100,000 toward the restoration provided the American Battle Monuments Commission is allowed to be involved in the restoration, operation and continuing maintenance of the memorial.

The meeting with Tourism officials was cordial and could lead to a successful, cooperative effort. For this to occur, the Delegation made it clear, over and over again, that the American Battle Monuments Commission had to be primarily involved. DAV officials made similar assessments and expressed similar concerns.

In conclusion, the Delegation agrees that:

1. The Island of Corregidor must be secured. Security was present on the day of our site visit and we were assured that security would continue.

2. The Pacific War Memorial must be restored and the surrounding buildings and grounds, gun emplacements, tunnels and docks must be maintained as part of the memorial site.

3. The Department of the Navy, with the approval of the Philippine government, should be requested to place a Civic Action Team or similar unit of SEABEES on Corregidor for the purpose of saving the historic sites and for the restoration of the roadways and infrastructure of the island.

4. The two governments should move immediately to get an accurate accounting of what transpired on Corregidor. Several of our guides disagreed on what happened at certain places on the island. For example, did General MacArthur and his family leave Corregidor from the north side or the south side of the island? Veterans who were captured on the island have the information and the Department of Defense should compile an accurate and complete history from this valuable source.

Members of the Delegation agreed that it is important for the two governments to work together as partners in restoring the battle sites and memorial on Corregidor.

It had been proposed that, in addition to the site visit to Corregidor, the Delegation should visit the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Memorial located on the site of the Japanese POW camp in Central Luzon. The memorial was constructed to honor some 3,000 American servicemen who died there and was dedicated on May 4, 1985.

The Delegation was unable to make the visit due to the short period of time scheduled in country; however, the Delegation recognizes the importance of the memorial and if agreement can be reached with the Philippine government to permit the American Battle Monuments Commission to operate and maintain the Pacific War Memorial, a logical extension of its mission there would be to assume jurisdiction over the maintenance of the memorial at Cabanatuan as well.

United States Veterans Administration in the Philippines

The Veterans Administration Regional Office in the Philippines is officially referred to as the United States Veterans Administration (USVA) so as not to be confused with its local counterpart—the defunct Philippine Veterans Administration (PVA) which is now known as the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO). The USVA is charged with the responsibility of administering the vari-

ous laws of the United States Congress which provide benefits for veterans and their beneficiaries residing in the Philippines.

The USVA has maintained an office in the Philippines since 1921. Prior to World War II, the office was staffed with 17 employees administering to the needs of 7,500 veterans throughout the country. As a result of World War II and the large increase in the number of potentially eligible veterans in the Philippines, the office was expanded and now has 200 employees, including nine Americans.

There are several distinct groups of veterans in the Philippines who are potential USVA beneficiaries. These include 20,000 old Philippine Scouts and others who served in the regular components of the U.S. Armed Forces as far back as the Spanish-American War, 110,000 Commonwealth Army Veterans (CAVs) who were inducted in the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) and saw action during World War II, 312,000 Recognized Guerrillas who joined the resistance movement after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, and 30,000 new Philippine Scouts who were recruited after liberation to patrol and police territories formerly occupied by Japan. The total is 472,000 of whom an estimated 178,410 may still be living. The widows, children and dependent parents of veterans who died in or as a result of their military service are also entitled to benefits from the USVA.

Many laws have been passed by the U.S. Congress to provide benefits for veterans. Several specific laws relate to Filipino veterans and provide for them many of the benefits enjoyed by American veterans. There are two basic types of benefits—monetary and medical. Monetary benefits include compensation, pension, educational assistance, vocational rehabilitation, insurance and burial allowance. Medical benefits include hospitalization, outpatient treatment, examination, prosthetic and sensory aids, and social work service.

By far the largest portion of the USVA activity is directed toward the payment of monetary benefits. Current disbursements average $10.3 million monthly or $123 million a year. Total USVA disbursements to the Philippines since 1946 have exceeded $2.9 billion. Monthly checks are forwarded to all 77 provinces and reach most of the 35,000 barios throughout the country. USVA payments in the Philippines have far exceeded those of any other U.S. agency, except the military, and undoubtedly, are a vital factor in the overall economy.

The USVA also maintains an Outpatient Clinic discussed later in this report.

There is also in the Manila Regional Office a unique USVA activity—the U.S. Social Security Program in the Philippines. The USVA develops claims, verifies public records and personally delivers large initial checks to social security beneficiaries. These beneficiaries are mostly Filipinos who worked in the United States and earned Social Security coverage, or their survivors. At present, there are 29,127 Social Security beneficiaries who are receiving payments in the Philippines. These benefits now total $6.4 million a month.

The Delegation visited the Regional Office on the morning of April 16. The Delegation met with the Director of the Office and his

key staff to review and discuss all aspects of the benefits and services offered to veterans in the Philippines. The Delegation was informed that the staff enjoys an excellent relationship with the veterans organizations in the Philippines, particularly with the Veterans Federation of the Philippines and the Philippine Department of The American Legion. USVA representatives frequently participate in meetings of veterans all over the Philippines to discuss benefits available to them. Often, it is only through such personal contacts that veterans are informed of their eligibility.

Special legislation is required to permit the VA to maintain an office in a foreign country and its present authority (P.L. 99–166) terminates on September 20, 1989.

The Outpatient Clinic and the Veterans Memorial Medical Center

The USVA Outpatient Clinic occupies three floors of the Associated Citizens Bank Building located at 666 T.M. Kalaw Street in Manila. Construction is now underway for a new facility that will replace the present clinic. The new clinic will provide a setting where outpatient care can be delivered most effectively to achieve the highest level of care for veterans.

The clinic is comprised of two divisions—a Medical Administration Division and a Professional Services Division—which are aligned with the other divisions in the Manila Regional Office. There are 37 full-time employees who make up the health care team of professional, technical, administrative and support personnel. Staff resources are augmented by consultants who are outstanding in their specialties.

For ten years after World War II, the USVA utilized hospitals throughout the Philippines on a contract basis to provide medical care for its service-connected veterans. This was less than a satisfactory arrangement especially because the standards of care varied.

Under the Rogers Act (P.L. 80–865), the USVA constructed and equipped the Veterans Memorial Hospital at a cost of $9,400,000. The hospital was turned over to the Philippine Government in 1955 and is now known as the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC). Through an agreement signed by representatives of both governments, eligible veterans are hospitalized at the VMMC on a contract per diem basis. Aside from VMMC, there are several fee basis hospitals throughout the country, where service-connected veterans may seek emergency medical care.

For more than three decades since the end of World War II, the Grants-in-Aid program had provided financial support for the medical benefits of Filipino Commonwealth Army veterans, Recognized Guerrillas and new Philippine Scouts. During this period, funds were provided for medical care, treatment and hospitalization of Filipino veterans; constructing and equipping the Veterans Memorial Medical Center; rehabilitation of its physical plant and upgrading of its equipment and facilities; and research, training and education of its health personnel.

All told, USVA expenditures for the Grants-in-Aid program from 1949 through September, 1981 totaled $47,881,532 with more than 41,000 Filipino veterans as beneficiaries. Under the RP-US Agreement dated July 28, 1982 implementing Public Law 97–72, the Phil-

ippine Government agreed to assume full responsibility for the medical care and treatment of all eligible Filipino veterans effective October 1, 1981.

PALAU

On the way back to the United States, the Delegation stopped at the Island of Palau arriving at approximately 11:30 a.m., Friday, April 17. The stopover was made to pick up Congressman de Lugo and Congressman Lagomarsino following their mission in Palau. While on the island, the Delegation visited the base camp of Civic Action Team 0701, a 13-member Navy SEABEE detachment at Camp Katuu. The team is homeported in Gulfport, Mississippi, and is a sub-unit of Naval Battalion SEVEN, currently deployed to Camp Covington, Guam. The unit arrived in Palau on December 13, 1986, and is scheduled to complete its mission in August of 1987.

The mission of the team is to undertake various public works projects designed to enhance the general welfare and environment of the residents of the island. One of the projects of this team is to perform maintenance on four existing war memorials located on the island. The Delegation believes a similar unit, or larger detachment, working with Philippine officials and the American Battle Monuments Commission, could be the initial ideal force used to restore the Pacific War Memorial on Corregidor.

Lt. J. F. Stader of Annapolis, Maryland, the Commanding Officer of Team 0701, met the Delegation at the camp site and briefed the members on the mission of the team. He and his men were very enthusiastic about their duties and felt the residents of the island and government leaders were working with them in an effective manner. In addition, the projects being undertaken were providing critical training for the unit in keeping the members of the team in a high state of readiness.

Although the living quarters at the camp were modest, they appeared comfortable and the attitude and spirit of the team members were upbeat. They were obviously proud of their work and with the positive impact their labor is having on those who live on the island.

Chairman Montgomery will discuss the possibility of dispatching a similar unit to Corregidor with the Secretary of the Navy subject to the approval of the Philippine Government.

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